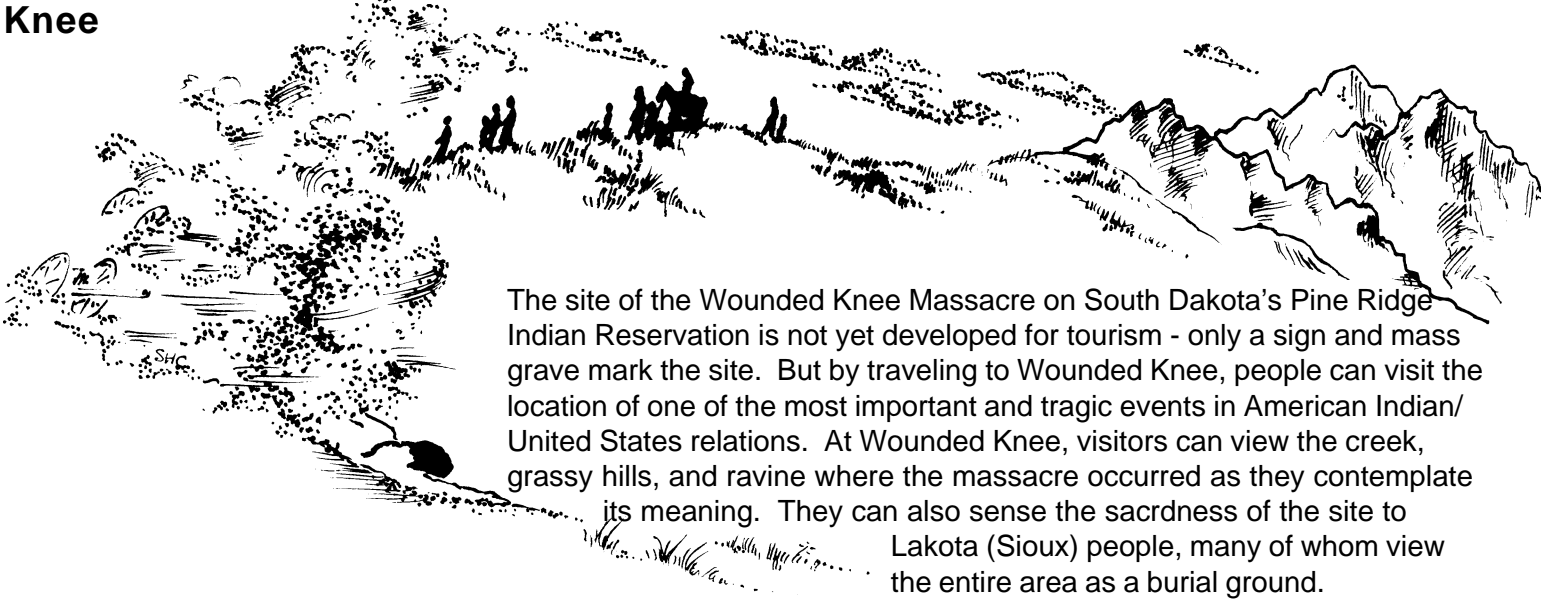


Journey to Wounded Knee

Badlands National Park
P.O. Box 6
Interior, South Dakota 57750

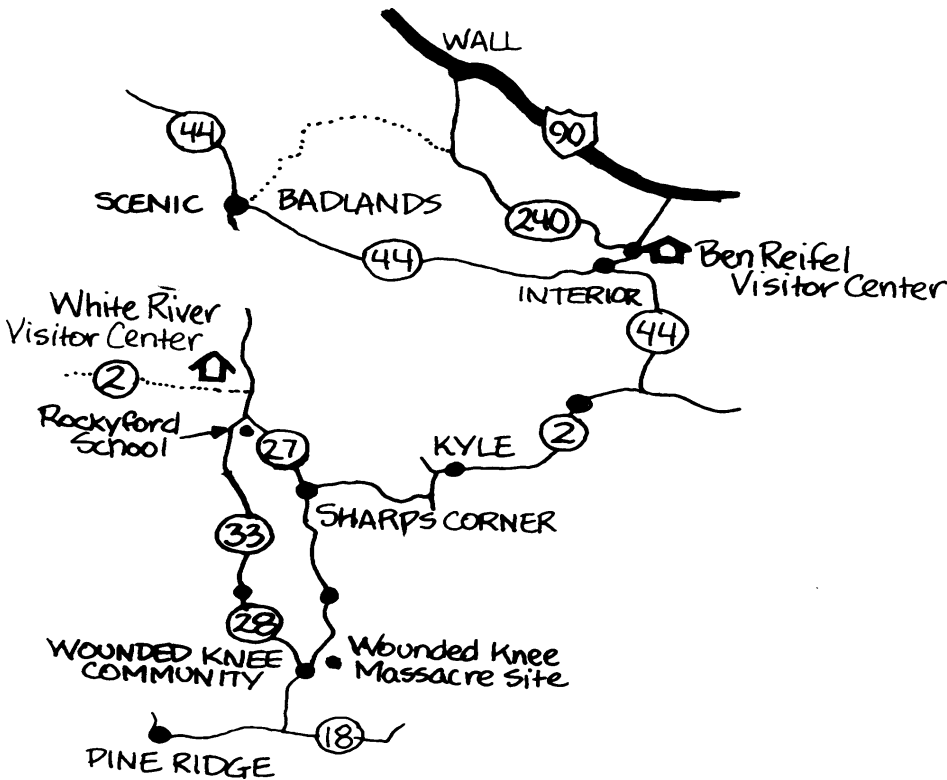
Journey to Wounded Knee



The site of the Wounded Knee Massacre on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is not yet developed for tourism - only a sign and mass grave mark the site. But by traveling to Wounded Knee, people can visit the location of one of the most important and tragic events in American Indian/ United States relations. At Wounded Knee, visitors can view the creek, grassy hills, and ravine where the massacre occurred as they contemplate its meaning. They can also sense the sacredness of the site to Lakota (Sioux) people, many of whom view the entire area as a burial ground.

Routes to Wounded Knee

Wounded Knee is situated on BIA 27 near its junction with BIA 28. Travelers from the north can follow 27 from Scenic or can reach 27 through Kyle on BIA 2. Travelers from the south can reach 27 from Route 18. Be aware that roads are not well marked and services are few and far between.



The events of December 29, 1890 sealed the fate of the Lakota people for the next 100 years. During the last half of the 1800's, Lakotas had seen the establishment of reservation life. Bit-by-bit their nomadic, buffalo-based existence had been destroyed by whites who limited their access to land and hunted the buffalo almost to extinction.

In 1890, Lakotas started to dance the Ghost Dance to encourage spiritual powers to return their former way of life. In response, the United States government sent army units to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to stop

the unrest expedted to follow the Ghost Dance. On the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation to the north, the government ordered Chief Big Foot's arrest for his support of the dance. When Big Foot and his band evaded arrest to seek sanctuary on Pine Ridge, the 7th U.S. Cavalry set out to find them.

On December 28, the army captured Big Foot's band and escorted it to their camp near Wounded Knee Creek. The next morning the cavalry commander, Colonel James W. Forsyth, called a council to collect the band's weapons. In the process of

disarmament, someone fired a gun. This one shot triggered an intense barrage of army rifle and artillery fire that killed more than 200 Lakota men, women, and children. Thirty soldiers also lost their lives, many from their own cross-fire. From the United States perspective, Wounded Knee meant the final conquest of Lakota people.

For Lakotas, the hope promised by the Ghost Dance disappeared, and they were forced to accept reservation life. As Lakotas say, the sacred hoop of their nation - which they equate with the life and health of their nation - broke at Wounded Knee.

